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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/733,649

12/11/2003

Andrew Christopher Wright

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EXAMINER

BOGART, MICHAEL G

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3761

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

12/26/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/733,649

Applicant(s)

WRIGHT ET AL.

Examiner

Michael G. Bogart

Art Unit

3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 October 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12, 28-48, 53 and 55-61 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-12 and 34-48 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 28-33, 53 and 55-61 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11 December 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 15 August 2007.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim rejections – 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

1. Claims 28-33, 53, 55 and 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

The last two lines of claim 28 read as: “to position the first **elasticized** region between said elasticized region and said central body.” As best understood by the examiner, there is no support for this limitation in the drawings or specification with regards to the spatial relationship between two elasticized regions.

Claims 29-33, 53, 55 and 56 are rejected as depending directly or indirectly from non-enabled claim 28.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 28-33, 53, 55 and 56 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The last two lines of claim 28 read as: “to position the first **elasticized** region between said elasticized region and said central body.” There is no antecedent basis for a “first elasticized region.” Furthermore, when viewing the claim as a whole, this relationship between two elasticized regions does not appear to be possible, particularly in light of the instant drawings.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later

invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. § 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

3. Claims 57-61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guevara (US 6,086,571 A; hereinafter "Guevara").

Regarding claim 57 Guevara teaches a disposable absorbent garment (20) comprising:

a topsheet (26);

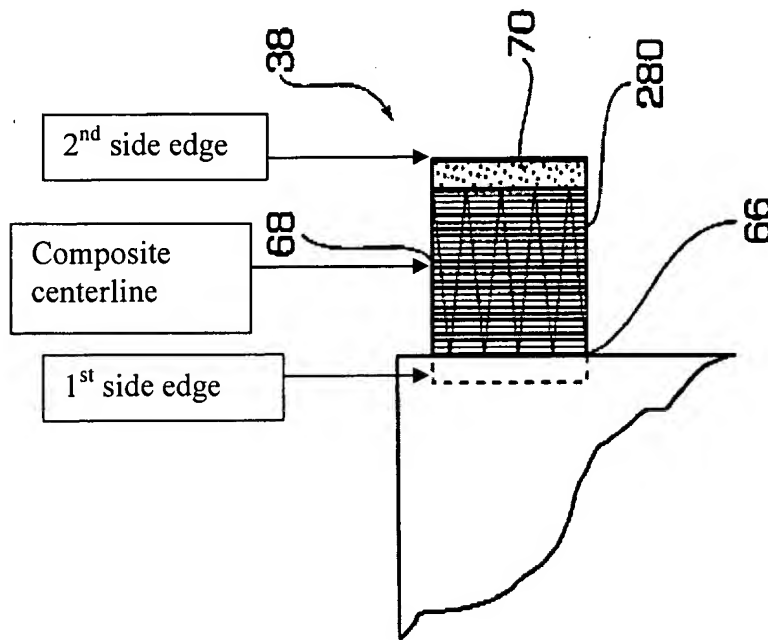
a backsheet (28);

an absorbent core (30) disposed between said topsheet (26) and said backsheet (28) such that a longitudinal centerline of said garment (20) extends through said topsheet (26), said backsheet (28), and said absorbent core (30), wherein said topsheet (26), said backsheet (28) and said absorbent core (30) provide a central body (24) of said disposable absorbent garment (20); and

an elastic composite band (38) attached to said central body (24), said elastic composite band (38) having a first side edge attached to said central body (24), a second side edge, and a composite centerline extending in a direction extending continuously between, and in generally parallel relation with, said side edges, said elastic composite band (38) including a base layer and top layer and an elastic construction (280) disposed between the base layer and top layer and spaced inwardly from each said side edge; and

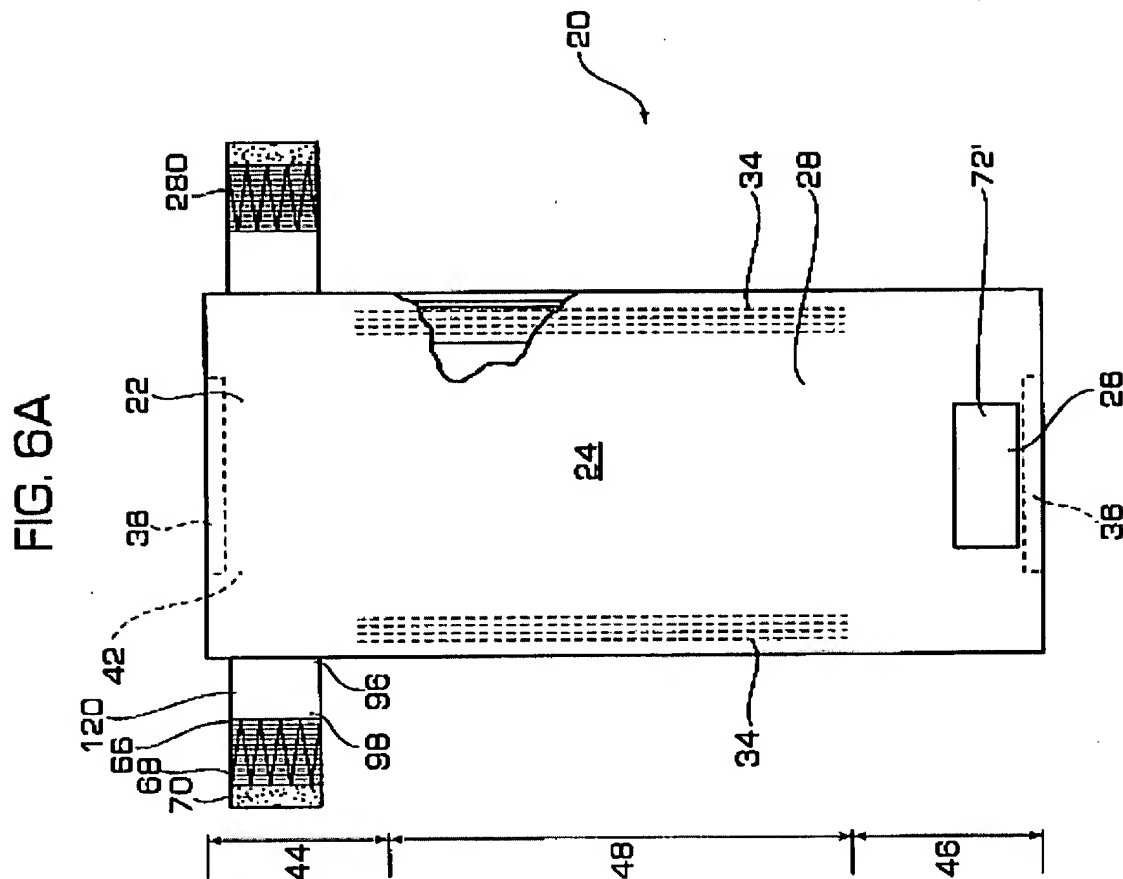
wherein said elastic construction (280) includes an arrangement of a plurality of spaced apart elastic elements (280) distributed in a direction extending between said side edges, each said elastic element being aligned in a nearly perpendicular relation with said composite centerline and spaced inwardly from said first side edge to form a non-elasticized region between

the first side edge and said elastic elements (280)(col. 10, lines 1-42)(see annotated fig. 3, and fig. 6A infra).



4. Guevara does not teach that that the elastic elements are generally perpendicular to the longitudinal centerline of the composite centerline. However, the do extend at a very obtuse or shallow angel that is almost 90° or perpendicular to the composite longitudinal centerline. Mere changes in shape are not sufficient to patentably distinguish an invention over the prior art. See *In re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966)(The court held that the configuration of the claimed disposable plastic nursing container was a matter of choice which a person of ordinary skill in the art would have found obvious absent persuasive evidence that the particular configuration of the claimed container was significant.). In the instant case, modifying the

reference's almost parallel elastic threads to be generally parallel elastic threads would not significantly change their stretch performance.



5. Regarding claims 58 and 59, Guevara teaches that the individual zig-zag segments of the elastic construction are spaced apart longitudinally adjacent to each other.

Further regarding the functional limitations of claim 58 concerning the ability of the elastic elements to impart tension, apparatus claims must be structurally distinguishable over the prior art. MPEP § 2114. While features of an apparatus may be recited either structurally or functionally, claims directed to an apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function, because apparatus claims cover what a device is, not what a device

does (*Hewlett-Packard Co. v. Bausch & Lomb Inc.*, 909 F.2d 1464, 1469, 15 USPQ2d 1525, 1528 (Fed. Cir. 1990)). Thus, if a prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use as recited in the preamble, or elsewhere in a claim, then it meets the claim.

6. Regarding claims 60 and 61, see fig. 6A, *supra*.


Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael Bogart whose telephone number is (571) 272-4933.

In the event the examiner is not available, the Examiner's supervisor, Tatyana Zalukaeva may be reached at phone number (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300 for formal communications. For informal communications, the direct fax to the Examiner is (571) 273-4933.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-3700.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Michael Bogart
20 December 2007

TATYANA ZALUKAEVA
SUPERVISORY PRIMARY EXAMINER

